



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
NORTHEAST REGION
One Blackburn Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

January 11, 2006

Dear Atlantic Surfclam and/or Ocean Quahog Permit Holder:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service) has issued final fishing quotas for the 2006 and 2007 fishing years for surfclams, ocean quahogs, and Maine ocean quahogs. This final rule modifies the 3-year (2005-2007) quota specifications published in the Federal Register (70 FR 2723) on January 12, 2005, by not increasing the ocean quahog quota in 2006 and again in 2007. The ocean quahog quota will instead remain at the 2005 quota level of 5.333 million bushels. The status quo quota (3.4 million bushels) for the surfclam fishery for 2006 and 2007, as well as the 100,000 Maine bushel quota for the Maine ocean quahog fishery for 2006 and 2007, remain unchanged. In addition, the minimum size limit for surfclams has been suspended for the 2006 fishing year. Below is a summary of the 2006 and 2007 fishing year quotas:

FINAL 2006 and 2007 SURFCLAM/OCEAN QUAHOG QUOTAS¹

| | 2006 | 2007 |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Surfclams ² | 3.400 | 3.400 |
| Ocean Quahogs ² | 5.333 | 5.333 |
| Maine Ocean Quahogs ³ | 100,000 | 100,000 |

¹ Numerical values in table are in millions of bushels except for Maine ocean quahogs

² 1 bushel = 1.88 cubic ft = 53.24 liters

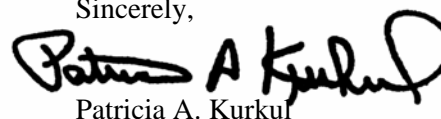
³ 1 bushel = 1.2445 cubic ft = 35.24 liters

These quotas were published in the Federal Register on December 28, 2005 (70 FR 76715). These quotas will be evaluated in an annual quota recommendation paper prepared by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council prior to September 1 to determine if the multi-year quota specifications remain appropriate. This letter does not contain all the regulatory provisions that pertain to these fisheries, and so, has no legal force or effect. A copy of the final quota specifications can be obtained through the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office's Web Site: <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/sfd/clams/>. Please visit this web site for up-to-date information on regulations, quota reports, maps of closure areas, and ITQ allocation information. If you need more information or a copy of the final specifications please call Brian Hooker at (978) 281-9220.

Also enclosed with this letter for your information is a guide on how to identify and react to discarded military munitions encountered while fishing. This guide was prepared by the Defense Ammunition Center U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety in part due to recent interactions between unexploded ordinance (UXO) and the shellfishing industry in the Mid-Atlantic region. For more information regarding UXO please visit <http://www.denix.osd.mil/uxosafety>.

This small entity compliance guide complies with section 212 of the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996.

Sincerely,


Patricia A. Kurkul

Regional Administrator

